

2002

‘A Hidden Side to the Story’: Reading Rape in Recent South African Literature

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Recommended Citation

Graham, Lucy Valerie, ‘A Hidden Side to the Story’: Reading Rape in Recent South African Literature, *Kunapipi*, 24(1), 2002.
Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol24/iss1/3>

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'A Hidden Side to the Story': Reading Rape in Recent South African Literature

Abstract

Sexual violence has had an uneasy relationship with literary representation in South Africa. Portrayals of rape have ambivalent potential, and the stakes are high where rape stories have served the interests of colonialism and apartheid. While it cannot be denied that representations of sexual violation have consolidated certain master narratives in South Africa, it is also true that narratives have been suppressed where these challenge power. Beth Goldblatt and Sheila Meintjes, reporting in the aftermath of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, claim that violence against women remains 'one of the hidden sides to the story of our past' (Goldblatt and Meintjes 7).

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